

## Words That Wound, Words That Heal

We read poems laced with vitriol,  
hoping they will heal us.  
But we don't need those poems of hate  
that spur us to self-deprecation.  
We have ourselves for that.

We plunge off the cliff,  
sinking into the choppy waters below,  
because they are warmer  
than the biting wind above.

We don't need their poems.  
They tear us down,  
then, while we're on the floor  
gasping for hope,  
they lean in and whisper *love yourself first*,  
and we call it motivation,  
to cover the bruise they left behind.

We soak up their toxic words,  
believing them the cure  
for our battered souls,  
when in truth  
they only make it harder  
for us to come up for air.

Break free from the toxicity.  
Poems can rise from curiosity,  
from gratitude, from love.  
We do not have to dive into the darkness  
to find inspiration,  
nor read by the smallest light  
for morsels of connection.

We don't need poems that hurt us  
to heal us.

